

BURKE CENTRE VRE PARKING FACILITY EXPANSION TASK FORCE

Final Meeting (#6) Summary

The sixth meeting of the Burke Centre VRE Parking Facility Expansion Task Force began at 7:15 PM on February 18, 2004, at Supervisor Bulova's office. Supervisor Bulova reviewed the mission of the task force as well as previous group meetings and each of their functions.

Supervisor Bulova introduced the chair of each subcommittee and thanked the Fairfax County Government and VRE staff members for their attendance and input at the task force meetings.

Supervisor Bulova handed out voting tickets that designated voting members and explained who was eligible. At the first meeting, the task force agreed that members could vote only if they attended 4 out of the previous 5 general task force meetings. She then described the nominating and voting process (specifically, Roberts Rules of Order) that the task force would use to adopt recommendations.

Supervisor Bulova asked Dan Southworth of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to present the county's answer to the Burke Centre Conservancy letter of December 12, 2003. Burke Centre Conservancy concluded that a "1450-space parking garage is not only too large for the nature, character, and extent of our surrounding neighborhood, but a total of 1750 parking spaces is not justified based on VRE ridership projections and the parking demand study documented in Fairfax County's own parking expansion feasibility study dated August 21, 2003."

Southworth said that county staff believes at least 1000 (2010 expected demand per previous high demand scenario) but probably 1500 (2025 expected demand in high demand scenario) parking spaces are needed, especially since the parking garage will not be finished until 2007. Since the VRE Phase II Strategic plan is ongoing, staff recommends that the number of spaces at this step in the design process should not be limited as this would constrain any flexibility later in the construction process. They would prefer to explore parking demand and community concerns further through the 2232 hearing process rather than limit the number of spaces at this time. County also recommends continuing to work with the task force as the County proceeds through the design, 2232, and construction process.

Dan Southworth and VRE's Jennifer Straub clarified that the 1500 parking space demand number is from VRE's Phase II Strategic Plan, which runs through 2025. The feasibility study, citing need at 1000 spaces, used estimates from Phase I, which only projects demand to 2010.

Joe Osborne asked if any plans existed for a station in western Fairfax County. Both Supervisor Bulova and Jennifer Straub said that there are no plans for such a station because a suitable location could not be found. That conclusion had been drawn a few years ago by a task force led by Springfield District Planning Commissioner Peter Murphy.

Expressing a major concern of the community, Ray Foreman said he did not want this station to be a transportation hub. When will VRE reach capacity? Currently, he stated, the trains seem to be reaching their "saturation point." Supervisor Bulova said that VRE already has 14-15,000 riders per day, and that number is rising rapidly. VRE is still working to expand their trains. According to

Jennifer Straub, part of VRE's current application for federal funds includes money for new train cars. VRE also recently purchased refurbished cars from the Metra rail company in Chicago that should be added to the system in the next few months. VRE's projections for their future fleet needs (i.e. the number of new cars and trains needed), Straub explained, are very conservative.

Mary Cortina clarified the Burke Centre Conservancy's position with respect to the garage's size. In making their recommendations for a smaller garage, they used the parking demand and ridership estimates made by the Desmon consultant. Jennifer Straub explained that the Desmon numbers were used as part of Phase I not Phase II. Cortina also stated that Burke Centre does not believe that VRE will inevitably follow the "high investment" scenario (outlined in the feasibility study) that would lead to the ridership levels currently projected for the Manassas Line and the Burke Centre station.

Both Leon Rose and Tom Schwarz asked why the ridership levels at the Burke Centre station were projected to increase so much by 2025. Reiterating their concern that this station not be a regional transportation hub, Rose pointed out that Burke Centre is already built out so new riders would be coming from other areas. Schwarz cited a statistic that population growth in the Braddock District is estimated at 8% and questioned why the garage's expansion should outpace that level of growth. Jeff Nolan pointed out that there is some small "infill" growth north of the railroad tracks that could contribute to ridership growth at the station.

John Provost added that Burke Centre does not necessarily want to attract Rolling Road station riders with the new garage. He asked if the county intended to proceed with expanding parking at the Rolling Road station. Supervisor Bulova said that once the Burke Centre station was complete that work was scheduled to proceed with parking expansion at Rolling Road.

Supervisor Bulova then introduced Janyce Hedetniemi, chairman of the Design Committee, and asked her to present her committee's recommendations. Hedetniemi acknowledged her committee members and thanked them for their hard work. She also thanked the group's guest speakers, including Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board member David Bulova, the Department of Planning and Zoning's David Marshall, and former Executive Director of the Fairfax County Water Authority Jim Warfield.

Hedetniemi explained that the purpose of her committee was to identify a series of design and strategic elements that should be considered as county staff proceeds to design and site the planned VRE parking garage. She then reviewed the process by which her committee reached their conclusions.

A summary of the Design Committee's recommendations follows. (For more detailed information, see the Design Committee's Final Report dated February 18, 2004.)

Design Committee Recommendations:

(1) Materials.

- A major concern is the garage's appearance. It should fit in and blend with the community. Sam DiBartolo's design, which includes a clock tower, is appended to the Design Committee recommendations.

- Use architectural patterns, different materials, textures, and color to enhance the attractiveness of the facility and avoid a monolithic appearance;
- Use colors in earth tones; use natural materials where possible;
- Use materials that are compatible with the existing station; and
- Use glass (unbreakable) and transparent materials for stairwells, elevators, and any bridge structure.

(2) Ingress and Egress (entrance and exit)

- Allow for multiple exits and entrances to best avoid stacking and bottlenecks;
- Control traffic and pedestrian flow; consider timing of lights during rush hours;
- Maximize safety for all users;
- Facilitate non-motorized access;
- Encourage and design for pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access; and
- Connect one level of the garage with a walkway for pedestrian access from the train station platform.

(3) Size

- What is a sufficient size? Design committee had concerns over the size of the facility, worked with the Operations committee and agreed to support **1100 spaces** constraint.
- Match number of spaces in the proposed garage with realistic demand data;
- Leave enough spaces outside the garage to meet the needs of the Farmers Market and Little League;
- Minimize the visual impact of the garage by designing with **height as a major consideration**;
- Design the garage so that it is compatible with the surrounding community;
- Consider the height without respect to zoning allowances i.e. design for lower height than is allowable; and
- Respect height restrictions in Burke Centre (amended later in the meeting to add “which are three (3) levels above ground.”)

(4) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

- Enhance lighting to facilitate safety for all users; use motion detectors to turn lights on and off at night;
- Assure visibility for pedestrians users and ensure that pedestrians are visible to vehicles;
- Segregate pedestrian and vehicular ingress and egress;
- Provide surveillance (or at least build in wiring so that it may be used later);
- Provide safe access for children in ball field;
- Use materials on the interior that enhance safety and security;
- Maximize openings between garage levels for increase visibility;
- Use glass on stairwells, elevators, and bridge to increase visibility (unbreakable);
- Concentrate exit and entrance points for safety and surveillance; and
- Use signs and graphics to facilitate efficient entrance and exit for all users and for safety.

(5) Green Building

- Minimize the impact of light pollution on surrounding neighborhoods, install energy efficient lighting, design floor plan to maximize interior daylight;

- Employ industry best practices and available technology to mitigate negative environmental impacts from garage construction as a function of garage design;
- Reduce impervious surface areas and treat storm water runoff from impervious surface areas so that the velocity of water runoff is reduced to avoid erosion and pollution of Sideburn Branch;
- Use green roof technology or another means to prevent rainfall from coming into contact with parking area;
- Integrate storm water treatment into the garage design and/or surrounding land, including parking islands and landscape buffers, applying techniques such as landscaping and "bioretention" systems such as Filterra;
- Assess pollutant potential from motorized traffic in and around garage and take appropriate actions to mitigate any negative effects; and
- Use Landscaping features (berms, trees, shrubs, grass, etc) on garage itself and in surrounding areas to improve appearance, protect sensitive environmental areas, and minimize effects of impervious surface areas.

(6) Amenities and Services

- Consider incorporation of vending areas into garage design for mobile vendors and kiosks.

(7) Other Strategic Elements – The Design subcommittee identified strategic elements that they considered important to the design, operation and function of the proposed facility. They include:

- Design the facility to serve its neighborhood as stated in the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan for the site which is within boundaries of a planned residential community;
- Recognize that the facility is not intended to serve as a transportation hub;
- Consider existing road infrastructure as a limiting factor;
- Apply environmentally sensitive design recognizing potential for negative impacts to Sideburn Branch/Pohick Creek, an impaired waterway under the Federal Clean Water Act, wetlands located on the site, and the site's floodplain;
- Design a structure that creates a sense of wellbeing in its neighborhood and provides a sense of community; and
- Consider ways to improve facilities for the Little League and also to help maintain commerce at the Farmer's Market.

(8) Referrals – These were items that the Design Committee saw as issues just not within their stated mission. They referred those they felt were the purview of another committee of the task force.

Hedetniemi made a motion to accept the recommendations that was seconded by Leon Rose. John Provost then proposed an amendment to add the clause "which are three (3) levels above ground" to the item on Burke Centre's own height requirements under "Size." Provost's motion was seconded by Tom Schwarz.

Supervisor Bulova posed a hypothetical situation to the group: we need 1100 spaces in the garage, environmental concerns force county staff shrink the footprint. Since certain limiting factors cannot be anticipated, county staff should not be limited to designing a three-level garage until the design process is underway. Provost said that the task force is making recommendations, not binding

requirements, and Burke Centre's recommendation is that the garage be no more than three levels. Ray Foreman explained that the Design Committee considered recommending a height restriction, but they concluded that the 1100 parking space recommendation would give the architects more flexibility should they encounter any unforeseen challenges. Mary Cortina added that this height restriction would not necessarily apply to a "green roof" or a clock tower should the design ultimately include one of these features. Supervisor Bulova then called for a vote and the motion to amend the "Size" section on Burke Centre height restrictions carried unanimously.

Debra Holland asked who would maintain the vegetation on a "green building." Hedetniemi explained that the specifics of maintenance were not the purview of the Design Committee but rather the Operations Committee. Mary Cortina added that the committee as a whole decided to recommend a "green" facility to make sure their preference was made a part of the record. Ray Foreman stated that green techniques prevent the spread of pollutants and erosion, which are both areas of concern for the community.

Debra Holland then asked whether overnight parking would be permitted and whether vendors at the station would be temporary or permanent. Hedetniemi referred the question of overnight parking to the Operations Committee. She added that they did not want to limit themselves to any one particular type of vendor at this stage of planning. Ray Foreman said that the committee was trying to think "outside of the box" and present ideas like a "dry cleaner on wheels."

Mary Cortina emphasized that Burke Centre has concerns about the baseball fields and the weekly farmer's market. These items were included in the Design Committee's report under "Strategic Elements," but the committee itself remained neutral with respect to designing features specifically beneficial to these two entities (e.g. bathrooms for the baseball fields).

Supervisor Bulova then asked if anyone desired further discussion on the main motion to adopt the Design Committee recommendations. The report and recommendations were accepted by a unanimous vote.

Supervisor Bulova then turned the floor over to Steve Schrobo, Chairman of the Operations Committee. He stated that his committee's purpose was to analyze current and projected ridership levels and suggest alternatives to relieve traffic while the parking garage was being built. The committee focused on supporting local, not regional, requirements; they also did not consider the Burke Centre Conservancy letter in their deliberations. The committee focused on three primary sets of recommendations: traffic, ridership/parking, and crime.

Operations Committee Recommendations:

(1) **Traffic** – Schrobo reviewed data available on major road infrastructure in the surrounding areas (see report and appendix). Recommendations include:

- Improvements recommended for Premier court as outlined in the county parking garage feasibility study;
- Improvements to the right turn lane from Roberts Parkway onto Burke Centre Parkway (there is a yield sign there but a driver needs to turn almost 180 degrees to see oncoming traffic); and
- Pedestrian access/trails/sidewalks from Burke Centre Parkway.

Kevin Morse and Tom Schwarz emphasized that the intersection of Burke Centre Parkway and Roberts Parkway is notorious for being unsafe.

(2) Ridership and parking

- Current ridership is around 900 from Burke and expected to grow to 1100.
- Ridership Recommendation: Based on current ridership and projected ridership in 2005 and 2010, and assuming that ridership growth will start to slow (as the Desman research indicates), the committee estimated that a total of 1100 spaces may be adequate for 2010 and beyond.
- Parking (add temporary - 249 spaces)
 - Note: Current parking is 550 spaces.
 - Consideration should be given to temporarily pave Old Guinea Road next to Target for temporary parking. (109 spaces)
 - Approach Target for use of a selected number of their parking spaces during garage construction. (55 spaces)
 - Proposed Burke Centre library parking lot as temporary satellite lot (140 spaces).
 - Continue to expand EZ bus service during and after construction.
 - Adopt recommendation proposed in county feasibility study to open part of the garage during construction.

(3) Crime

- No significant problems noted on their analysis.
- Recommendation: random and routine Fairfax County police patrols must be made a part of the normal patrol route during the work day to minimize crime.

(4) Other considerations (recommendations only see report for full detail)

- Consideration should be given to adjusting the timing of constructions to minimize impact on Ball Field and Farmer's Market activities.
- Builders should plan for continuous access to the Ball Field during 1 Mar through 30 July and 15 August through 30 October.
- Schedules for buses 17B and 17L should be integrated to support VRE schedule.
- Bus routes should be expanded within a two mile radius of the Burke Centre station to allow VRE riders the option of taking Metro Bus to the Burke Centre Station.
- A ride on the buses should be at no charge if going to or coming from the VRE Burke Centre Station (similar arrangements exist within DC).
- The Fairfax Connector should be asked to consider expanding service to the Burke Centre station integrated with the VRE schedule.

Steve Schrobo then made a motion to accept the Operations Committee recommendations and report that was seconded by Steve Brown. Supervisor Bulova asked for discussion on the motion.

Jeff Nolan asked if the Operations Committee had considered using swimming pools as satellite lots during the off season. Schrobo said they had not considered that option because the parking lots would only be available seasonally. The committee made consistency a priority – people might get confused if the available parking areas shifted throughout the year. Nolan then made a motion to

ask local swim clubs in the area to use their parking lots in the off-seasons; the motion was seconded by Ray Foreman.

Joe Osborne expressed his concern that some swim clubs, like those in Burke Centre, use their facilities as community centers all year long. Florence Naeve expressed concerns about liability. Supervisor Bulova pointed out that the county has assumed liability in such situations before. Steve Schrobo explained that his own objection is that they want to maintain consistency in the temporary parking areas. His committee needed to find about 250 extra spaces for cars displaced during the garage's construction, and they determined that 249 spaces would be available year round in the areas identified in this report.

Ray Foreman asked about using the Rolling Valley Mall park and ride as a satellite parking area, but county staff explained that this lot was also full and could not accommodate VRE passengers. Jeff Nolan then withdrew his motion to consider pools and swim clubs as parking areas. Mike Lake reminded the task force that the Department of Transportation was in the process of restriping the existing parking lot to add 60 spaces and then adding 20 more spaces on a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) "outparcel" adjacent to the lot.

Leon Rose suggested routing the CUE Bus from Fairfax City to the Burke Centre station so that people from Fairfax City would have added access to the station. Supervisor Bulova said that she would like to see a bus from the station through Fairfax to the Government Center. Rose then made a motion to add "and CUE Bus" to recommendation #4 under "Other Considerations" part B. John Provost seconded the motion, and the task force voted unanimously to adopt the amendment.

Larry Ichter stated that the 18 month construction estimate is based on the fact that summer construction time is more efficient than winter construction time. Changing the construction schedule to meet the Operations Committee's requests would possibly add to the cost of and timeline for the structure.

Debra Holland asked again if overnight parking were permitted at the garage. Mike Lake said that the county has not adopted an official position regarding overnight parking and, at the moment, was at his discretion.

Kevin Morse reminded Supervisor Bulova that funding for the EZ Bus subscription bus service would run out at the end of this year. He said that the Operations Committee recommendations depended on maintaining that service, so funding to continue the program would need to be secured. Jan Hedetniemi, who also serves as the Braddock District representative on the Transportation Advisory Committee, said that she will recommend Roberts Road pedestrian access as a "spot improvement."

Supervisor Bulova then called for a vote on the main motion to accept the recommendations as amended by the task force. The group voted unanimously to accept the Operations Committee's report and recommendations.

Supervisor Bulova asked Mike Brennan, Chairman of the Pedestrian/Bike Access Subcommittee, to present his committee's report. After introducing the members of his committee, Brennan stated his

group's mission – to improve and promote pedestrian and bicycle access to the Burke Centre station, to increase pedestrian traffic, and to decrease motorized access. The committee's recommendations are broken into three areas: access from the station's north side; access from the station's south side; and general pedestrian access enhancements in and around the station. The first two pieces carry equal weight and are more important recommendations than the third, general section, Brennan explained.

Pedestrian/Bike Access Committee Recommendations:

(1) Improve Pedestrian and bike access to the VRE station from the north side of the tracks

- Pedestrian bridge across the railroad tracks;
- Guinea Road/Roberts Road intersection improvements; and
- Pedestrian/bike access along Guinea Road.

The committee did not recommend a walkway from the Roberts Road overpass unless a pedestrian overpass in any form is not possible.

(2) Improve Pedestrian and Bike access to the VRE station from the south side of the tracks

- Paths/bridges over Sideburn Branch in the Burke Centre open space
- Roberts Road/Burke Centre Parkway intersection improvements for pedestrians
- "Southern Pacific Bike Trail" – enhance and extend Fairfax County Park Authority path through the Pohick Stream Valley Park from Burke Lake Road to the Burke Centre open space areas (this recommendation is a lower priority than the first two recommendations).

(3) General Pedestrian and Bike access improvements

- Guard rails along Roberts Parkway to protect pedestrians on the path
- Bicycle parking areas and stands at the station
- Sidewalks through the station parking lot

Brennan then moved to adopt the Pedestrian and Bike Access Committee's report. His motion was seconded by Debra Holland, and Supervisor Bulova asked for discussion on the motion. Amy Vogt, who was not a voting member, asked that the committee strike the following sentence from section II.1 of the report: "The path proposed in the Feasibility Study to connect Meridian Court was not identified as a priority." Mary Cortina made a motion to amend that sentence that was seconded by John Provost. Cortina said that this path should be listed as a priority even if the committee does not wish it to be a top priority. She proposed the following changes to the sentence: "The path proposed in the Feasibility Study to connect Merridith Court/Chase Commons should be considered as a separate and lower priority." With no further discussion of the amendment, Supervisor Bulova called for a vote and the amendment to the motion was accepted unanimously.

Ray Foreman asked if the committee had considered any recommendations to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic in and around the station. Brennan said that "high value access connections" were their priority. Joann Sokol added that the group tried to emphasize comfort for pedestrians and bike riders. Debra Holland also said that the group had recommended guard rails along Roberts Parkway and near Target. Supervisor Bulova and Karyn Moreland said that guard rails are designed to deflect vehicles back into the road and do not provide any protection to pedestrians. The areas cited by the committee for guard rails would likely not qualify under the standards set by VDOT.

Robin Williams asked if the committee had discussed illuminating crosswalks; Supervisor Bulova referred this issue to county staff for further consideration. Kevin Morse asked why the committee recommended connecting the pedestrian overpass directly to the garage. Brennan explained that this measure might reduce construction costs. Florence Naeve asked why no recommendations were made to install lights on the Roberts Road overpass. Debra Holland answered that the committee did not consider the Roberts Road overpass to be a “good” pedestrian option due to elevator constraints and so did not tackle the issue of lighting.

Sam DiBartolo asked about providing a path from the Cove Landing area of Burke Centre to Premier Court. Mary Cortina said that a “beaten path” and a park trail already ran through the area but it would need significant improvements. Supervisor Bulova suggested that this proposal might be explored further in the future as another pedestrian improvement.

Without further discussion, Supervisor Bulova called for a vote on the motion to adopt the committee’s report. The report and its recommendations were adopted unanimously by the task force.

Supervisor Bulova then explained the remaining steps in the garage design and construction process. First, the Planning Commission would hold a “2232” hearing, and she said that her office would alert the community to the exact date and time once that information was available. Supervisor Bulova explained that the task force recommendations would not be attached to the Planning Commission’s report as “Attachment A,” but instead she would present the matter before the Board of Supervisors instructing county staff to take and use the recommendations during the design and construction process.

Supervisor Bulova will hold another meeting of the task force in late summer 2004 as well as a community-wide meeting prior to the 2232 public hearing before the Planning Commission (date to be announced). Mary Cortina asked if a smaller-scale garage would present any problems for the county in securing a contract with a design firm; Carey Needham assured her that a reduced garage size would not be an issue.

Ray Foreman suggested that county staff should get input from VRE riders before the 2232 hearing and allow them to prioritize their concerns about the garage’s design and construction. Mary Cortina, on behalf of the Burke Centre Conservancy, then thanked Supervisor Bulova for hosting the task force and allowing this level of citizen participation.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 P.M.

Attendees:

Braddock District

Supervisor Sharon Bulova
Commissioner Suzanne Harsel
Florence Naeve
Robert Glass

Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

Larry Ichter
Carey Needham
Ken Lim

Department of Transportation

Mike Lake
Karyn Moreland
Dan Southworth

Virginia Railway Express

Jennifer Straub
Sirel Mouchantaf

Mike Brennan*
Steve Brown*
Mary Cortina*
Sam DiBartolo*
Shirley DiBartolo*
Ray Foreman*
Pat Halpin
Janyce Hedetniemi*
Debra Holland*
Everett Johnson*
Jamie Lewis
Kevin Morse*
Jeff Nolan*
Joe Osborne
John Provost*
Deborah Richardson
Leon Rose*
Steve Schrobo*
Tom Schwarz*
Joann Sokol*
Saleh Srouji
Amy Vogt
John vonSenden
Joe Wells
Robin Williamson

*Denotes voting member of the task force.

Voting Members Not Present:

Kate Mattice
Mike McMahon

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